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## Economic Commission for Europe

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**Team of specialists on sustainable fisheries**

# Programme of Work of the Team of Specialists on Sustainable Fisheries 2018-2019

*Summary*

The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) Team of Specialists (ToS) on Sustainable Fisheries promotes, facilitates and supports the development and implementation of fishery data standards throughout the supply chain, which contribute to the sustainable and ecosystem-based management of marine and aquatic resources on a global scale. Such standards include the Fisheries Language for Universal eXchange, developed by the United Nations Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business (UN/CEFACT FLUX).

This document presents the Programme of Work of the ToS for the period 2018-2019, and will be submitted to the twenty-fourth Plenary of UN/CEFACT for endorsement.

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# I. Background

1. World fish stocks are being depleted by overfishing, destructive fishing practices and illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing. These activities not only threaten fish stocks, but also the coastal communities which rely on fisheries resources for economic survival and as a reliable source of protein. The importance of protecting fishery resources is recognized by the international community through Sustainable Development Goal 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development.

2. An essential step to attain effective and sustainable management of fishery resources is timely acquisition and exchange of information on fishing location, gear used, species and quantity caught, etc. Until now, fishing vessels have mainly used paper-based logbooks to record and exchange such information. To improve information acquisition and management, the United Nations Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business (UN/CEFACT) has developed an open and global standard which allows the electronic exchange of fishery data.

3. The Fisheries Language for Universal eXchange (FLUX) provides a harmonized message standard which allows Fishery Management Organizations (FMOs) to automatically access electronic data from fishing vessels, such as vessel and trip identification, fishing operations (daily catch or haul-by-haul) and fishing data (catch area, species and quantity, date and time, and gear used). With this standard, FMOs around the world have, for the first time a tool which automates the collection and dissemination of fishery operational data needed for sustainable fishery management and for detecting and combatting illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing. In addition, the development of a reliable and up-to-date database on fish catch will improve the knowledge base for science-based fisheries management.

4. The UN/CEFACT FLUX standard was presented at the twenty-seventh UN/CEFACT Forum in Geneva, where experts from government, regional and international organizations, regional FMOs, industry, research, and control and enforcement authorities agreed on its importance as a standardized tool to exchange fisheries information in an effective, transparent and efficient manner. At this forum, it was decided that a community should be established to promote and support the implementation of the FLUX standard.

5 The Agricultural, Agri-Food and Fishery Programme Development Area of UN/CEFACT supported and approved this proposal and decided to create a Group of Experts from this community. The establishment of the Group of Experts, now referred to as the Team of Specialists (ToS) on Sustainable Fisheries, was approved by the Executive Committee (EXCOM) of the UNECE in June 2017.

# II. Introduction

6. The present document sets out the Programme of Work (PoW) of the UNECE ToS on Sustainable Fisheries for 2018-2019. UN/CEFACT is invited to adopt it at the twenty-fourth Plenary (ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2018/22), and thereafter submit it to the EXCOM of the UNECE for approval.

# III. Scope, Overall Objective, Activities, Work Areas

## A. Scope

7. The activities of the PoW are open to the participation of all UN member States, fishery management organizations (FMOs) and other organizations involved in fishing activities and sustainable fisheries management. They support efforts which combat IUU fishing and sustain the livelihoods of those who depend on fisheries activities and resources.

8. They do so by promoting, facilitating and supporting the development and implementation of fishery data standards.

9. The PoW is linked to the Terms of Reference (ECE/EX/2017/L.9) as approved at the ninety-second meeting of the UNECE EXCOM (23 June 2017).

## B. Objective

10. The overall objective of the ToS is to contribute to integrated maritime governance by promoting, facilitating and supporting the implementation of fishery data standards on a global scale. The ToS is expected to achieve its overall objective and implement the necessary activities on the assumption that:

(a) there is active participation and contribution by experts from governments, academia, civil society and the private sector during meetings of the ToS, and through other relevant networks;

(b) Governments are willing to engage in policy dialogue with key stakeholders for sustainable fishery management and take measures to implement policy recommendations and standards; and

(c) extra-budgetary resources for capacity-building, advisory services and field projects are adequate.

## C. Activities

11. To achieve this goal the ToS will:

(a) Actively promote fishery data standards on policy and technical levels;

(b) Share experiences on the implementation of fishery data standards;

(c) Develop and share best practices on fishery data standards;

(d) Advise and assist on implementation issues concerning fishery data standards and how to relate to broader sustainability standards and certification;

(e) Propose changes to standards in the Agricultural, Agri-Food and Fishery PDA of UN/CEFACT.

## D. Work areas

12. The Programme of Work is structured around the following work areas (WA):

- WA1: Policy dialogue and advice;

- WA2: Technical monitoring, assessment and guidance;
- WA3: Communication and outreach;
- WA4: Capacity-building and partnerships.

**WA1: Policy dialogue and guidance**

13. This Work Area involves active promotion and support of the implementation of fishery data standards on a policy level. This Work Area encompasses active engagement with policymakers on a global scale by contributing to events on fisheries and by engaging authorities and Regional Fishery Management Organizations (RFMOs). Activities of this Work Area are as follows:

- Participate in international Conferences and Fora (UN/CEFACT Forums, United Nations Ocean Conferences, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) Committee on Fishery sessions, Global Sustainable Seafood Initiative (GSSI) Board and Research Data Alliance meetings, etc.)
- Have meetings with Regional Fishery Management Organizations (RFMOs)
- Produce a paper on policy and legal issues related to regulations, coding and identifiers, data usage and data rights

**WA2: Technical monitoring, assessment and advice**

14. This Work Area facilitates and supports the development and implementation of fishery data standards on a technical level. This involves the development of handbooks and sharing information and best practices on technical implementation matters. Activities of this Work Area are as follows:

- Identify the needs for the development and implementation of fishery data standards
- Produce a questionnaire and conduct a survey on the need for advice and support to enhance and disseminate knowledge
- Draft a handbook on policy issues and technical implementation for fishery data standards (including an implementation document template)
- Produce FAQs on lessons learned from implementation of fishery data standards (e.g. European Union, Brazil, Thailand, etc.)
- Prepare a brochure on the interaction between UN/CEFACT FLUX and the open source FOCUS community[1], the implementation of vessels monitoring systems and other implemented sections of FLUX
- Draft a briefing of general information on what it takes to move to FLUX (regulatory, financial, IT requirements, etc.)
- Provide technical support on implementation requirements through an expert group
- Liaise with other relevant bodies (e.g. Research Data Alliance, Working Party of Fishery Statistics)

**WA3: Communication and outreach**

15. Activities of this Work Area are as follows:

[1] http://www.focus.fish/

- Establish a communication group
- Prepare and disseminate handbooks and implementation guides for the fishery data standards;
- Develop information on the work of the ToS and on fishery standards via policy briefs, press briefs, and flyers;
- Develop the website of the ToS, contribute to content design and maintenance, and use social media and videos, as appropriate;
- Participate in and contribute to relevant conferences, fora and events to disseminate information;
- Perform outreach activities beyond the promotion of fishery data standards to highlight the benefits of other standards/processes within sustainable fisheries, such as tracking and tracing, or statistics, and risk management;
- Produce a handbook on regulation, content structure such as code lists, and identifiers and data rights;
- Cooperate with the track and trace initiatives in the supply chain;
- Cooperate with standards setting and certification bodies on sustainable fishery management (e.g. FAIRTRADE[2], International Trade Centre (ITC) sustainable network)
- Raise funds for the activities laid out in the Programme of Work.

**WA4: Capacity building and partnerships**

16. Special attention will be given to small fishery communities which have neither the knowledge nor the financial means to adopt and implement fishery data standards.

17. By seeking partnerships, this Work Area will establish a solid foundation for the promotion and implementation of fishery data standards and work on sustainable fishery and combatting IUU fishing. It will also support of the implementation of relevant targets under SDG 14 on the conservation and sustainable use of oceans, seas, and marine resources, and SDG 17 on partnerships.

18. By sharing knowledge and expertise through collaborations and partnerships, this Work Area will connect with fishery management organizations and fishery communities to exploit the benefits of collaboration and minimize the chance of working separately on the same issues.

19. Collaborations have already been established, and need to be further developed, with:

- The European Union represented by the Directorate General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries (DG MARE)
- The Fisheries Open Source Community Software (FOCUS) [3]
- The World Animal Protection's Global Ghost Gear Initiative
- The FAO's Global Record on Fishing Vessels, Refrigerated Transport Vessels and Supply Vessels[4]

[2] https://www.fairtrade.org.uk/

[3] http://www.focus.fish/

- World Trade Organization (WTO) work in relation to fishery subsidies contributing to IUU fishing, overfishing, and overcapacity (SDG 14.6)
- ITC work in support of sustainable fishery management (sustainability network)
- World Customs Organization, in relation to their work on customs issues for fishery trade
- FAO and the World Health Organization's work on health-related issues and CODEX Alimentarius[5]
- Branch organizations (e.g. International Sustainable Seafood Foundation) in supply chain and certification organizations (e.g. FAIRTRADE, Marine Stewardship Council)
- And relevant private sector companies.

## IV. Guiding principles

20. The work of the ToS and the execution of this Programme of Work is guided by the following principles:

- Expert advice;
- Respect and mutual acceptance of any level of involvement or contribution;
- Full alignment of the work of the ToS with the Terms of Reference and Programme of Work.

## V. Governance

21. The Team is guided by its Chair, which is supported by one or two Vice-Chairs.

22. It is the responsibility of the Chair that the objectives of the ToS are met and follow the Programme of Work.

23. Members of the ToS, as resources permit, undertake the substantive work. They undertake the preparation of substantive documentation for the meetings and the reports to be submitted to the annual UN/CEFACT Plenary.

24. The ToS is supported by the UNECE Secretariat.

25. Participation in the ToS is on a voluntary basis. All members of the ToS must register as experts of UN/CEFACT, in accordance with relevant procedures.

## VI. Funding

26. Members of the ToS shall support its activities and are encouraged to find the necessary resources.

[4] http://www.fao.org/global-record

[5] http://www.fao.org/fao-who-codexalimentarius/about-codex/en/

# Annex

## Vision and Mission Statements of the Team of Specialists on Sustainable Fisheries

1. The draft vision and mission statements for the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) Team of Specialists (ToS) on Sustainable Fisheries have been developed in line with the Terms of Reference and complement the Programme of Work of the ToS. The document has been reviewed and approved during the first session of the ToS, on 29-30 January 2018 and will be submitted for information at the twenty-fourth Plenary of the United Nations Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business (UN/CEFACT).

## I. Vision statement

2. The work of the ToS will be instrumental to achieve:

an effective and efficient exchange of information related to fishery activities and the subsequent supply chain, between all stakeholders,

to help reduce Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing,

to support sustainable and ecosystem-based management of marine and aquatic resources on a global scale,

in line with Sustainable Development Goal 14 of the United Nations Agenda 2030, on the conservation and sustainable use of oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development.

## II. Mission statement

3. The ToS will contribute to integrated maritime governance by promoting, facilitating and supporting the development and implementation of fishery data standards[6] throughout the supply chain that contribute to the sustainable and ecosystem-based management of marine and aquatic resources on a global scale, notably through the UN/CEFACT standard Fisheries Language for Universal eXchange (FLUX).

4. In a collaborative environment, together with other relevant standard setting bodies, the members of ToS will work to promote standards for exchange of information related to fishery activities, share experiences on development and implementation issues, and facilitate and support the implementation of these standards worldwide.

5. The ToS will give advice and conduct support activities regarding policy and technical implementation of fishery data standards. In particular, the ToS will prepare implementation guides and handbooks.

6. The ToS will contribute to sustainable fisheries and efforts to combat IUU fishing by promoting the timely acquisition of high quality fisheries data and sharing this data in an effective and efficient manner.

[6] Such Fishery data standards, which cover fishery activities and traceability throughout the supply chain, are distinct but complementary and synergistic with fishery statistics standards and fishery information standards set by other relevant bodies with global mandates such as the Coordinating Working Party on Fishery Statistics (CWP) and the Fisheries and Resources Monitoring System (FIRMS).

7. The ToS will provide a platform to fisheries management organizations worldwide to discuss, share and support the implementation of globally compatible fishery data standards as tools to improve sustainable fisheries management, combat IUU fishing, support livelihoods, and protect our oceans.

8. The ToS will function as a platform for:

- Policy consultation and dialogue
- Technical consultations for standards development and implementation
- Technical advisory services
- Exchange of best practices